REPORT ON THE TIGER SHOOT ARRANGED AT BHADRAVATI FOR HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF MYSORE DURING FEBRUARY 1929.

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After the drive at Murhunse on 19-1-29 for the Dawsons, camp was closed. All were sent back to Mysore except Jamadar Naganaik and two sepoys. We were asked to continue baiting at Kagehalla, Malliahnakere and Tholachikatte and await definite instructions.

Orders were received on 25-1-29, that a tiger shoot should be arranged for His Highness in the first week of next month; Sare evening an urgent telegram was received to meet Captain Nabi Khan, A.D.C. at Chickmagalur on ~~the next day~~.

The following instructions were given :- Get 30 sepoys and two Jamadars; flags to be put up on the lines at Gaddigae for the collection of Shikaries on the day of drives; that is, the villagers should stay at their places from a given date till about 9 to 10 A.M. everyday and in case a flag is hoisted to the tree - which should be clearly visible and pointed out to them previously- they should all collect themselves at a given point; the shikaries should be explained and instructed as to how the beats have to be conducted; four machans to be put up in each block; should be ready for the shoot any day after the 1st of next month and the sending of the sepoys to the different villages may be deferred till His Highness actually arrives at Bhadravati.

There were in all 15 kills as detailed below:- 5 at Malliahnakere (on 21-1-29, 25-1-29, 29-1-29, 3-2-29, 4-2-29) 2 at Kagehalla(on 21-1-29 & 5-2-29) and 8 at Tholachikatte (on 29-1-29, 31-1-29, 2-2-29, 2 on 5-2-29, 2 on 6-2-29 and 1 on 7-2-29).

Eight baits costing Rs. 106-8-0 were purchased and 5 - buffaloes and 3 donkeys out of 13 baits remaining out of the Dawsons Shikar were utilized leaving a balance of 6 baits at the end of the shoot (3 buffaloes, 1 donkey and 2 goats).

As there were six kills between 29-1-29 and 4-2-29 much difficulty was felt for the erection of machans and other minor improvements to the blocks when tigers were staying inside. We had to work very cautiously lest we should disturb the tigers and drive them away. It required a bit more labour than it was necessary at ordinary times.

Two cross-lines about 1½ furlongs in length were scraped and sanded at Kagehalla, cart-track above Malliahmakere tank-towards forest-was improved to spot out pug-marks, cart-track to Ramalli-Thota via Tholachikatte was swept, and square patches were scraped and sanded near all the three blocks where tigers were naturally moving out after kills, to facilitate tracking.

Four machans were put up in each block and small paths leading to the machans were cleared. Positions of the machans at Tholachikatte were entirely changed - from the side of the bund to behind the tank, so that they may be in the natural path of the tiger towards Ramalli-Thota. This took up a good lot of work as a blank space intervened in the middle of the thicket. A spot close to the bund, where the tiger was generally breaking out, was selected for the principal machan and the other alternative thicket was cut off by means of wing - nets.

Thirty sepoys with two Jamadars came to Bhadravati on 29-1-29; six sepoys with Havaldar Hanumantha were stationed at Aralahalli and six others with Havaldar Mirza Abbas Alli were made to stay at Ghante-Kanave; the rest at Bhadravati.

Two trees were selected, one on a small hillock to the right of Permenahalli and the other at the entrance of the village of Aralahalli for hoisting flags. Aralahalli flag can be seen from the villages of Mulgere, Attigunda, Thiplapura and even Kudlagere.(Flag cannot be seen from Kerapura and Baballi but information can be sent as they are close to the block) and that of Permenahalli by Balenahalli, Ittegae, Yerehalli,Kodihalli and Hirekathur.

Education of the shikaries was taken up in earnest. When everything was explained to the villagers in presence of their

patels and what they were expected to do impressing on them the fact that their safety during the drives and not the getting of a tiger was the main object of the shikars conducted by the Palace, it was a pleasure to see the spontaneous outburst of enthusiasm and loyalty from the unsophisticated villagers. They said they would turn up in a body, whether they were paid or not, Conduct themselves in an orderly fashion and if they were to get only a "darsan" of their beloved Maharaja, that would be sufficient compensation for their pains.

Everything was kept ready for a shoot on 3-2-29. The Conservator of Forests wanted to inspect the machans in all the blocks. When we reached Malliahnakere at 8-30 A.M. bait had been killed and dragged inside the block. By tracking - which was easy on account of a slight drizzle, previous to the kill - we made out that there were three tigers of medium size. Block could not be disturbed, proceeded to Tholachikatte. On the way at Permenahalli watcher Honnanayaka came with the information, that the kill of the previous day (which was not dragged) had been taken away by two tigers. Fresh baits - two at each block - were tied and anxiously awaited the arrival of the party.

On the next day i.e., 4-2-29 there was another kill at Malliahnakere. Went out at 2 P.M. to Kagehalla with the Conservator of Forests. While taking him round there was a strong smell of the tiger in front of the principal machan. On tracking it was clear that the tiger was actually in the bush where it was suspected.

By the time we returned - about 4 P.M. His Highness and party had arrived and were in Guest-House. Instructions were given to arrange for a drive on the following day in case of no kills to try a chance beat at Malliahnakere. Sepoys could not be communicated at Aralahalli and Gharte-Kanave regarding the shoot, on the same night.

TIGER SHOOT AT KAGEHALLA.

Went with Range Officer Mr.K.Ghorpade in a car at 6-30 A.M

There was no kill at Malliahnakere. Of the two baits at Tholachi-katte, buffaloe on the cart-track was killed and dragged, donkey tied at the edge of the Ittegae tank was killed but not dragged. Sent the kill information to Bhadravati. On tracking at 9 A.M. round the block it was made out that both the kills were by a single tiger and that it went away towards Ramalli-Thota in the early - hours of the morning.

Hearing that there was a kill, the villagers of Balenahalli and Permenahalli began to collect themselves without waiting for the flag to be hoisted. We were in a dilemma as to what to do - whether to try Malliahnakere or Tholachikatte itself. Mr. K. Ghorpade returned with the information that there was a kill at Kagehalla also and it was decided to have a shoot only at Tholachi-katte at 12 noon as being the place where there was already a shoot on 17-1-29. Sepoys with nets etc were on their way to Permenahalli.

Went back to Bhadravati, requested Captain Nabi Khan, A.D.C. to change the programe since the tiger was not in the block at Tholachikatte and the one at Kagehalla will not remain for more than a night. He was kind enough to extend the time by an hour i.e., 1 P.M. and consented for the change at 11 A.M.

There was very little time and to add to our - difficultics the villagers had already been informed that there would be no shoot on that day. Hoisted the flag at Aralahalli, sent Range Officer Mr.Syed Mamood to Attigunda to hasten collection of men. Fortunately the villagers responded to the call; collected nearly a hundred men by 11-45 A.M. started surrounding the block by 12-10 P.M. by which time the Sub-Division-Officer, Bhadravati who was stopping near the bridge with a few guards to keep watch, informed that the tiger growled twice inside the block and gave every one of them a shake and a thrill. Watcher Kytanayaka who was sent round to track once again returned and said that the tiger came from inside the block and took the bait which confirmed the previous day's tracking i.e., the tiger was in front of the principal machan.

Surround had to be started from the road itself. Completed surround with 174 men collected from the different villages as detailed below :- Aralahalli 56, Mulgere 2, Attigunda 48, Gowdahalli 21, Thiplapura 31, and Eerapura 16. The Shikaries of Karehalli(23) who had been picked up on the way to Tholachikatte in the lorry came to the block along with the sepoys but were too late for the drive. Baballi men (about 40) who came late were not also taken for the beat.

As the tiger was heard in the thickets behind the machans a silent drive had to be conducted from the road up to the machan lest the tiger should be left behind. While scouring out the area, dislodged one herd of wild boars and found fresh tracks of tiger about 100 yards behind the machans.

His Highness and party were seated on the machans at 1-50 P.M. No time even to put up the few wing nets for which a line was cleared and even forks were kept ready - posted stops on the right side. They were not in strict conventional converging line as there were no trees to post them on the opposite bank of the sudden bend in the "Halla" - Nala.

Beat started at 2-30 P.M. from the 2nd cross-line about 600 yards from the principal machan, though the tiger was tracked to be within the 1st cross-line (250 yards) as no reliance could be kept on the Shikaries who were used to a noisy drive in that self-same spot. With all the previous instructions the villagers suddenly went out of control and began their original drive - on the example set by some of our own sepoys - in which the right wing joined. Cried halt, rearranged the beaters and sent Range Officers Sambasiva Rao and P.A. Thimmiah to the right to keep the men silent in the paddy-fields.

If the beat had been started from the 1st cross line they would have made the tiger jump up, which was already on the more, and bolt like lightning. By the time the shikaries walked the first 300 yards they were more under control owing to their diminished numbers and the rest had cried themselves hoarse.

The line was again rearranged near the 1st cross-line and the drive proceeded very ~~shartly~~ slowly. When nearing the "Dead line" - the line beyond which the beaters should not proceed, about 75 yards from the first machan - the tiger got up with a growl and moved towards the gun. It did not follow the path in which it was expected but went at a quick pace to the right along the edge of the "Halla" where it was shot through the clearing to the wing net. Probably the tiger sighted the party. If the wing nets had been spread they would have made the tiger fall into a heap within 30 yards to the right of the machan.

Tiger after the first shot got itself entangled in some creepers on the side of the bank and while trying to get into the "Halla" was made to get up by stop No.2(Kyatanayaka) after which it moved towards the 3rd machan and received two fatal shots from Mr. Sadeg Z.Shah, A.D.C.

Stop No.1(Honnanayaka)began talking after the 1st shot contrary to irstructions and Lance Naik Putta did not keep perfect silence on the right wing, nearing the machan, as he was expected to do.

The wounded tiger was cautiously followed from the 1st machan with crackers etc and was found dead in a hallow in the midst of the thicket in front of the 3rd machan. Tiger was a full grown magnificient brute with a massive head; taped 10'-1" on the contour and 9'-9" between pegs.

On the whole the shoot was a success, considering the hurry in which the men were collected, the disturbance caused to the tiger half an hour.before the drive - being driven back from behind the machans. Shikaries behaved very well, there was the willingness but wanting in execution, were amenable to control - needless to say that the presence of His Highness acted as a talisman. Some of the patels being given the privilege to sit for being photographed along with His Highness has made them feel important men and hereafter we can count on their services without any extraneous pressure.

POINTS FOR FUTURE GUIDANCE.

1. Whenever possible machans should not be directly in the line where the tigers are expected to break out and should be to a side so as to get a broad side of the animal.

2. Two Thatties - of green leaves - to be tied in front of the machans with only about 9" space between the two so as to have a good sight but the body and even the head of the sportsman should be completely concealed - better if painted green cloth is substituted for the leaves.

3. Stops should always be posted in the form of a V i.e., more and more - converging towards the principal machan.

4. Gun rests should invariably be tied and the surface of the machans made perfectly smooth as to afford a comfortable seat.

5. Some of the sepoys should be trained for stops.

6. Kill informations to be sent at once and then the report- after tracking - as to whether the tiger is in the beat or not.

DRIVE AT THOLACHIKATTE

ON 6-2-1929.

Two kills at Tholachikatte, buffalow and donkey both were dragged into the thicket. Tracking not possible on one side of the block - being dry paddy - fields. Tiger tracked not to have passed the other three sides. Decided to have a chance drive. Thicket at Ittegae was walked through so that in case the tiger was lurking at that place it may move on to Tholachikatte.

Hoisted the flag; collected 146 men and 4 patels within 12 noon at Permenahalli from the following villages;- Permenahalli 28, Balenahalli 52, Karehalli 23, Ittegae 13, Yerehalli 15, Thimmapura 10 and Huralahalli 9.

Surround was complete by 12-30. As a preliminary step the slope of the hillock was included in the beat and the men were made to walk up to the cart-track. Scoured out the thickets behind the

the machans and spread wing nets (10) to the left side. Posted 5 good stops on the tank bund.

His Highness motored up to Permenahalli and then was brought in the bullock trailer - tonga up to the block. Party were seated in the machans by 1-30 P.M.; men posted in front of No.1 machan to link up the wing nets were withdrawn and the beat started.

This was the second drive under our management, shikaries conducted the beat in a very orderly fashion and proceeded without noise. After more than half the area was walked through some beaters shouted they sighted a cub going a-head which made the men keep up the line and proceed with caution. In fact some "Langoor" monkeys - "Musiya" were walking just like tiger on the dry leaves. When almost near the first machan thinking it was a blank-drive a rifle shot banged out. It excited over depressing thoughts and while arranging the men into groups heard the long-whistle - that the tiger was dead, which made us doubt whether the shot was really at a tiger. We were asked to proceed and then it was evident that it was purposely done to add some excitement. Some of the sepoys who were not at the spot did not want to be behind the others in sharing the credit for the successful shoot, took it seriously and realing a-right the report of the rifle and the signal that followed began to spin stories as to the size and sex of the tiger.

Shikaries were allowed to retain the tickets and no disbursements were made that day.

Another bait was killed on the following day-7-2-39 at Tholachikatte but the tiger was completely tracked to Ramalli - Thota about ore mile from the place of kill by 9-30 A.M. As there was no other drive the shikaries were paid on the next day at the usual rates of 0-8-0 per shikari and Rs.1/- per headman or patel.

Total expenditure for the shoot amounted to Rs.976-4-6 as per details noted below :- T.A. and cart hire of the sepoys - Rs.594-5-6m; cost of baits (8) Rs.111/- Machans including ropes (6) Rs.11-0-0, Teak wood ladlers (2) Rs.5-8-0, block works Rs.7-0-0, drives ? Rs.187-10-0, Telegram charges 2-4-0 and presents Rs.57-0-0.

In addition to the disbursement made at Kagehalla one coloured Khadi baniyan was presented to each shikari - ticket holder A.few of the guards and trackers were also given at Ittegae as per details noted below :- Aralahalli 49, Attigunda 43, Thiplapura 28, Gowdahalli 16, Mulkere 2, Eerapura 11 and miscellaneous such as trackers, shikaries and some headmen at Ittegae 23, total 172.

The following Forest Officers and subordinates were present and assisted in the shikar :-

1. Mr. M.Machiya, Conservator of Forests, Shimoga.
2. " K.Revanna, District Forest Officer, Bhadravati.
3. " P.S.Lakshmanamoorthy, S.D.O. Bhadravati.
4. " K.Ghorpade, Range Officer, Bhadravati.
5. " Sambasiva Rao, Range Office, in charge of Fuel supply.
6. " B. Syed Mamood, Range Officer, Bhadrapur
7. " A.Seshagiri Rao, Range Officer, Tarikere.
8. " P.A.Thimmiah, Range Officer, on special duty.
9. " K.R.Venkata Rao, S.D.O. Tarikere.

Guards Peeraji at Permenahalli and Sakreya at Kagehalla were very useful throughout the shikars.

After the sepoys came to Bhadravati on 29-2-29 most of the works such as collection of the shikaries, supervision of works etc were independently managed and personal acquintance with many of the villagers has been cultivated. Kind treatment, our anxiety to bring the shikaries safe from the drives, ticket system, quick payment accompanying the shikaries for beats, presents of baniyans etc have altered the opinion of the villagers.

Above all the presence of His Highness at the shoots has done more than anything else to infuse full confidence and in future we are sure to count them on our side, without any disturbance to the regular working of the other departments.

A. R. Nellakantaiah
Ranger in charge of
Tiger Preserves

MYSORE, 28 3/29.